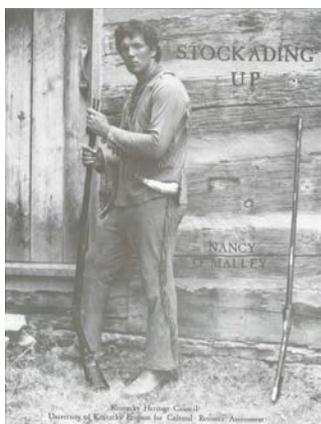


## Research Interests

A persistent theme in my research is the idea of frontier, a concept that I trace directly to my upbringing. For me, a frontier can be a physical place or a social arena, and generally both. Kentucky's

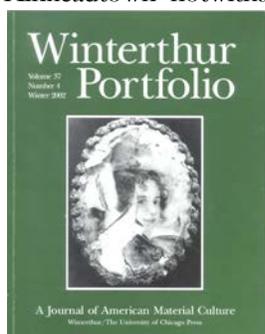


position as one of the earliest areas of western expansion, not to mention being the home of the iconic frontiersman, Daniel Boone, certainly qualified it as a “frontier” in the classic Jacksonian sense. My interest in frontiers coalesced with a research project that began when I learned of the site type called a “station” – a defensive residential site that usually housed more than one family—that was a key element of the early historic settlement of Kentucky during the Revolutionary War. A research grant from the Kentucky Heritage Council enabled me to investigate the Kentucky frontier culture and station sites in the Inner Bluegrass region and resulted in a publication entitled, “Stockading Up”: An Archaeological

Evaluation of Station Sites in Central Kentucky, published in 1987. What began as a modest and limited attempt to identify station sites and their characteristics led to much more wide-ranging research inquiries, including many conference papers, lectures, articles and specific site studies such as my work at Fort Boonesborough, one of the early large Revolutionary forts in Kentucky, and Hugh McGary’s Station in Mercer County, Kentucky, among others.



Construction plans for a street project in Lexington, Kentucky triggered a major archaeological excavation of Kinkeadtown, a post Civil War neighborhood in Lexington, Kentucky, settled largely by freed slave families. As I conducted research on the families that moved to Kinkeadtown to take up their lives as freed people, I realized that I was dealing with another frontier that was just as fraught with unfamiliar, potentially dangerous conditions as the frontier of my stations research. The adjustment from slavery to freedom was a fascinating and absorbing research challenge for me and my research completely altered the assumptions I had at the outset of the project. In addition to a technical report, my Kinkeadtown research was summarized in a refereed article published in *Winterthur Portfolio*. The compelling story of Kinkeadtown notwithstanding, the project uncovered an artifact that finally gave me the answer to the question that every archaeologist hears eventually: “What’s the coolest artifact you ever found?” A hand-painted portrait miniature of a young white woman found in the back yard of one of the early Kinkeadtown families was the obvious answer. Not only was the artifact unique and exceptional but why it was present in an African-American assemblage still has me thinking about possible explanations.



I continue to explore the social dynamics of slavery and emancipation with research on the black Civil War Union Army soldiers from Bourbon County, Kentucky. In this research, I trace the life experiences of men who began life enslaved, trained and fought as soldiers in a bloody civil war that won them their freedom and returned to a profoundly different social order in which they struggled to live their lives as free and equal citizens. Part of the research process required that I become familiar with slavery as an institution, its effect on both owners and the enslaved and the implications slavery had for Kentucky society. This research has yet to see publication but there is an important story to be told and lessons to learn from these men’s experiences.

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Another research interest concerns historic industries, particularly water powered milling (grist, gunpowder and paper) and red clay earthenware potteries. Excavations at the Peter Evans' grist mill in the Raven Run Nature Sanctuary (Fayette County, Kentucky) and McConnell's Springs in Lexington, Kentucky where a major gunpowder mill supplied the U.S. Army during the War of 1812 and Indian agents in the western frontier until 1833 resulted in two publications and several conference papers. [http://www.mcconnellsprings.org/images/McConnellSprings\\_in\\_Historical\\_Perspective.pdf](http://www.mcconnellsprings.org/images/McConnellSprings_in_Historical_Perspective.pdf) For the last ten years, I have contributed articles on milling topics to *The Millstone*, a journal issued by the Kentucky Old Mill Association. I continue to gather data on mill sites, and local redware pottery production in Kentucky with plans for publication in the future.

Most recently, I have been thinking about issues of class and social identity. Utilizing data collected over the many years of my professional career in Kentucky, as well as the vast resources of the Museum of Anthropology, I have just begun synthesizing ideas about class formation, image creation, social identity and the material culture that informs those topics. My two most recent papers presented at the 2010 and 2012 annual conferences of the Society for Historical Archaeology focus on these issues.

My work with the Museum has immersed me in collection management and curatorial concerns and the challenges museums face to manage the immense archaeological collections generated by contract archaeology. The W.S. Webb Museum of Anthropology is one of the oldest anthropology museums in the United States with world class collections that are studied by researchers from all over the world. Managing these resources so that they are accessible to researchers, grappling with space issues for ever increasing holdings and keeping the museum and its mission relevant to the profession as well as society at large are persistent and difficult challenges faced by every museum. My recent article in the book, *Archaeology in Society*, edited by Marcy Rockman and Joe Flatman, discusses some of the challenges museums face.

I have also served since 1995 as volunteer exhibits chair for the Hopewell Museum, a fine arts and local history museum in Paris, Kentucky. I directly supervise and/or design at least one major exhibit every year, generally on local history topics. This job allows me to exercise my creative side and gives me the opportunity to research topics like historic textiles, the distilling industry, historic agriculture, and many others subjects of interest. [www.hopewellmuseum.org](http://www.hopewellmuseum.org)

Many of my interests lead me to interdisciplinary collaborations. One of these relationships is with historic architecture and the cultural landscapes that buildings inhabit. I was one of the founding members of the committee that developed the Master's Program in Historic Preservation in the University of Kentucky College of Design and taught a core graduate course on historic documentation as adjunct faculty from 2000-2010. Another interdisciplinary collaboration is with geography. My professional collaboration with Dr. Karl Raitz, University of Kentucky Department of Geography, has resulted in several publications, most recently, *The Maysville Road: America's First Highway in the Trans-Appalachian West*, published by The University Press of Kentucky.

Archaeology is a discipline that is tailor made for someone with intellectual curiosity, a preoccupation with the human condition and the ability to cheerfully get dirty, fight insects, and endure bad weather in pursuit of data. The archaeological process is not limited to digging up sites, as is often supposed. Every stage of the process from compiling a research design to identifying appropriate methodologies to gathering, analyzing and interpreting the data engages one's mind, pushes intellectual boundaries and forces the researcher to critically examine and question assumptions and preconceived notions. There have been times of stress or disappointment when I questioned whether I should remain in my field but I have always

resolved the conflict by reflecting on alternate career paths and realizing that nothing else ultimately holds the same appeal for me. I don't think a person can ask for much more out of a career than the satisfaction of absorbing work in a fascinating field.